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## **Detailed Guidance on How to Open a USAID Mission**

Supersedes Handbook 23, Chapter 2, Opening a USAID Mission

### **A. Opening a USAID Mission**

This Supplement is intended to help assure fast, positive action for the Opening Team and to help the cooperating government in this effort. It also covers the administrative guidelines incident to establishment of a USAID mission following the negotiation of bilateral agreements, determination of the types of programs to be implemented, and written approval by the Administrator, USAID, to open a USAID mission.

### **B. The USAID Mission Opening Team Composition and Administrative Guidelines**

The Overseas Management Staff (M/AS/OMS) coordinates with the appropriate geographic bureau and the Office of Human Resources (HR), for the Opening Team. M/AS/OMS should be advised of any special requirements in order to determine the experience, background, or skills required of the prospective Executive Officer.

The USAID Mission Opening Team:

1) Consists of an experienced Executive Officer, an IG/SEC representative and, when necessary, a Controller. In the interest of economy and efficiency, if possible the Executive Officer should be made available from a nearby USAID mission; otherwise from USAID/W. The IG/SEC representative should determine security requirements early in the planning stage.

2) Consults the post report and discusses with the Department of State the characteristics and conditions particular to the cooperating country, including embassy facilities in providing support and services to meet USAID's needs. In particular, these discussions should include such requirements as utilities, space (both office and residential), equipment and supplies. USAID usually operates and controls its own administrative support services overseas and the Opening Team should strive to achieve this economically and early. However, if determined through discussions with the Post Management Officer in the Executive Director's office in the appropriate geographical bureau of the Department of State, that particular services are best provided at post by the embassy, a preliminary agreement is developed and the embassy is advised by the bureau Executive Director of any obligations in advance of the Opening

Team's arrival.

- 3) Arranges for an allotment of operating expense funds to the new USAID mission.
- 4) Arranges for the financial management activities to cover all identified fiscal requirements. Depending upon the nature of the country program, appoints a USAID Controller or a Regional Controller to perform the required financial management functions.
- 5) Arranges with the Department of State to use the services of the embassy Cashier. If not feasible, appoints a Principal Cashier and an alternate. Explains to the Cashier duties and responsibilities and gives instructions on records and reports.
- 6) Obtains instructions for managing and installing the operating expense (OE) budget.
- 7) Consults with the Office of Information Resources Management, Computer Operations Division (M/IRM/TCO) on cable, telefax, and other communications support services.
- 8) Consults with the Office of Administrative Services, Information Support Services Division (M/AS/ISS) on diplomatic pouch schedule, mailing list, and commercial courier services. Also obtains copy of the latest **ADS CD** and CD Reader if necessary.
- 9) Issues a USAID General Notice regarding the opening of a new USAID mission and includes the address, method of communicating, pouch schedule, APO information, etc.
- 10) Initiates the procurement and shipment of office equipment such as computers, printers, typewriters, copiers, calculators and office supplies. Includes for procurement a basic supply of all commonly used USAID forms (refer to ADS Chapter 505 (Formerly Handbook 18, Appendix A), or the USAID Forms Catalog), non-USAID forms (e.g., Standard Form (SF) 1169, United States (U.S.) Government Transportation Request, SF 1103, U.S. Government Bill of Lading, OF 347, Order for Supplies or Services, etc.), stationery, dictionaries, biographic registers, Standardized Government Regulations, and the ADS. These and all other required equipment and supplies are ordered on form AID 5-7, Supplies/Equipment/Services Requisition. Submit requisitions to the appropriate USAID/W office in M Bureau with appropriate USAID mission fiscal data for procurement and shipment to post.
- 11) Determines motor vehicle requirements and procures directly from the vendor.

12) Determines the availability of surplus equipment within the area from other USAID missions and U.S. Government agencies.

13) Issues all essential mission orders and ensures the proper authorities required for the new operation are obtained. In particular, delegations of authority, personnel ceilings and current allotments, appropriation symbols and amounts should be issued.

C. Initial Administrative Duties at the USAID Mission -- Embassy Contacts

1) Upon arrival at post the Executive Officer should contact the embassy Administrative Officer and Regional Security Officer and hold discussions on administrative and security support. These discussions should cover the support that the embassy is capable of providing temporarily and those administrative requirements that are peculiar to the need of USAID. These discussions should include the following:

a. The reason USAID has a presence in the country, the type of program proposed and the number and categories (i.e., Foreign Service National (FSN) and U.S. direct-hire, Personal Services Contractors PSC)) of personnel to be assigned and recruited.

b. The methods under which the embassy operates, and the relationship with the host government. Such as:

1. Attitude of the host government and possible support that can be expected.

2. Availability of resources on the local economy (i.e., personnel and commodities).

3. Availability of office space and residential units, (U.S. Government leasing versus Living Quarters Allowance).

4. Interim support, if required, that the embassy can provide in areas such as:

a) Space: Office and/or Residential

b) Transportation

c) Building Maintenance

d) Custodial/General Service Functions

- e) Local Personnel Administration
  - f) Communications, Files and Messenger Service
  - g) Security Support, e.g., guards, storage of classified materials, etc.
  - h) Host country requirements and practices involving currency exchange, import and customs regulations, tax exemption, etc.
  - i) Development and installation of an accounting system for the USAID mission in accordance with Financial Management requirements.
- c. Arrangements for larger team support--action service available through the ICASS mechanism.
  - d. Other U.S. Government and international agencies active in the country; their purpose and the program relationships of each.
  - e. Arrangements for introduction and appointments with appropriate representatives of other U.S. Government, international and host government entities.
  - f. When the above steps have been accomplished, proceed with actions necessary to activate a USAID mission.

D. Host Government Contacts

The objectives of these meetings are to:

- 1) Establish a working relationship to effect implementation actions between the host government and the USAID mission.
- 2) Determine the extent to which the host government can provide support for the program, such as, using transportation, supplies and equipment, maintenance, etc.
- 3) Identify problem areas that may require resolutions. For example: Consider any special import or tax laws which could impact on the quality and timing of USAID logistical support, or any special currency regulations which the new USAID mission might encounter.

E. Other Contacts

Other U.S. Government agencies may be operating in the area. The Opening Team should establish contact with these agencies and use whatever mutual

support services are available through these agencies and, in turn, extend any services that the USAID mission is able to provide--consider available ICASS services. For example, the U.S. Information Service (USIS) might provide communications media. Contacts may also be made with other donors and with international and private sector organizations to determine the possibility of mutual cooperation in achieving the developmental objectives of the host country.

#### F Housing

- 1) An employee's temporary lodging allowance is limited to three months after the date of first arrival at post (See Standardized Regulation 121); therefore, housing arrangements for permanent USAID mission personnel should be given top priority.
- 2) USAID prefers that employees lease their own quarters and be reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of the Standardized Regulations. If not feasible for employees to rent privately (scarcity of adequate housing, long-term advance rental payment requirements, etc.), the USAID mission will provide government-leased housing.
- 3) The Opening Team will determine whether the employee can lease adequately furnished quarters or whether unusual conditions at post warrant the need of U.S. Government-leased housing and the provision of residential furnishings.

#### G. Office Space

- 1) The embassy can be helpful in locating office space. If U.S. Government-owned property is not available, office space should be leased. Security waivers, if required, are to be approved prior to entering into any lease. (Prior USAID/W approval is required for office rentals, an advance of rent exceeding 18 months as well as for the purchase or construction of office space). The Opening Team is to adhere to security guidelines on office buildings and obtain RSO clearance. (See Handbook 6, Security.)
- 2) Arrangements should be made, if possible, for the host government to provide office space for program-funded personnel. This has the advantage of placing the USAID technician and his counterpart in close proximity to one another and reduces expenditures.

#### H. Cleaning and Custodial Services

- 1) Cleaning and custodial services for office space may be provided for in the lease or through contract arrangements.

2) The custodial and maintenance responsibilities for U.S. Government-held residential properties are set forth in ADS Chapter 535.

I. Procurement and Interim Transportation Arrangements

1) All non-activity type vehicles to be titled to the U.S. Government, including participating agency vehicles, are to be ordered directly through the vendor (See ADS Chapter 536). M/AS/OMS and M/AS/AP will assist with the purchase of American-made vehicles when requested by USAID missions. All activity vehicles to be titled to the cooperating government are to be procured in accordance with procedures dealing with activity commodity procurement.

2) Until the vehicles arrive at post, arrangements of interim transportation should be made. The Opening Team may:

- a. Arrange with the embassy to share in its motor pool.
- b. Seek assistance from other U.S. Government agencies in the area.
- c. Request the host government to provide transportation.
- d. Contract for the transportation.

J. Records Management

Arrange for a bar-lock safe and restricted area for safeguarding sensitive material. Classified material is to be maintained at the embassy unless otherwise approved by the Regional Security Officer or Unit Security Officer at post. Until this is done, it will be necessary to rely upon the embassy to secure such material.

K. Property Records System

Establish a property records system to reflect the receipt and control of USAID mission property in accordance with Handbook 23, Chapter 4.

L. Foreign Service National (FSN) Personnel

1) General

Initially, FSN staff recruitment, processing, and hiring should be done by or with the cooperation of the embassy Personnel Officer and Regional Security Officer. The team will need copies of the FSN local compensation plan and have available copies of the FAR/AIDAR and related forms/macros

2) Administrative FSNs

Direct employment of FSN personnel should be held to a minimum practicable level. Administrative support operations, i.e., guard, cleaning and custodial services may be carried out by third party contract or non-personal services contract rather than by direct-hire employees, whenever practicable.

3) Activity/Program FSNs

Every effort should be made to have the host government finance the employment of necessary FSNs for activity/program operations from its own resources or counterpart funds. The terms of the bilateral agreement will govern.

M. Automation Systems

The appropriate M/IRM/CLS client analyst should be consulted as to the automation systems that may be useful for post operations and to determine the appropriate hardware and software required to support those systems.